This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (previously presented): A method for forming a first commutative checksum for digital data comprising the steps of:

grouping said digital data into a number of data segments by a computer,

forming a first segment checksum for each said data segment,

forming said first commutative checksum by a commutative operation on said first segment checksums, and

cryptographically protecting said first commutative checksum by using a cryptographic operation.

Claim 2. (previously presented): A method for checking a predetermined cryptographic commutative checksum comprising the steps of:

grouping digital data into a number of data segments by a computer,

allocating said predetermined cryptographic checksum to said digital data,

subjecting said cryptographic commutative checksum to an inverse cryptographic operation to form a first commutative checksum,

forming a second segment checksum for each said data segment,

forming a second commutative checksum by a commutative operation on said second segment checksums, and

checking said second commutative checksum for a match with said first commutative checksum.

Claim 3. (previously presented): A method for forming and checking a first commutative checksum for digital data comprising the steps of:

grouping said digital data into a number of data segments by a computer,

forming a first segment checksum for each said data segment,

forming said first commutative checksum by a commutative operation on said first segment checksums,

cryptographically protecting said first commutative checksum by using at least one cryptographic operation, which forms a cryptographic commutative checksum,

subjecting said cryptographic commutative checksum to an inverse cryptographic operation to form a reconstructed first commutative checksum,

forming a second segment checksum for each said data segment of said digital data to which said first commutative checksum is allocated,

forming a second commutative checksum by a commutative operation on said second segment checksums, and

checking said second commutative checksum for a match with said reconstructed first commutative checksum.

Claims 4-9 (canceled).

Claim 10. (previously presented): An arrangement for forming a first commutative checksum for digital data which are grouped into a number of data segments, said arrangement comprising:

an arithmetic and logic unit,

a first segment checksum, which is formed for each said data segment,

a commutative operation which forms said first commutative checksum by operating on said segment checksums, and

a cryptographic operation which cryptographically protects said first commutative checksum.

Claim 11. (previously presented): An arrangement for checking a predetermined first commutative checksum which is allocated to digital data which are grouped into a number of data segments, said arrangement comprising:

an arithmetic and logic unit,

an inverse cryptographic operation to form a first cryptographic checksum from a cryptographic commutative checksum formed by a cryptographic operation,

a second segment checksum which is formed for each said data segment,

a commutative operation which operates on said second segment checksums which forms a second commutative checksum, and

a comparator which checks for a match between said second commutative checksum and said first commutative checksum.

Claim 12. (previously presented): An arrangement for forming and checking a first commutative checksum for digital data which is grouped into a number of data segments, said arrangement comprising:

an arithmetic and logic unit,

a first segment checksum, which is formed for each said data segment,

a commutative operation which forms said first commutative checksum by operating on said first segment checksums,

a cryptographic operation which cryptographically protects said first commutative checksum,

a cryptographic commutative checksum formed by said cryptographic operation,

an inverse cryptographic operation to form a first commutative checksum from said cryptographic commutative checksum,

a second segment checksum which is formed for each said data segment of said digital data to which said first commutative checksum is allocated,

a commutative operation which operates on said second segment checksums which forms a second commutative checksum, and

a comparator which checks for a match between said second commutative checksum and a reconstructed first commutative checksum.

Claims 13-18. (canceled).

Claim 19. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

forming said first segment checksums in accordance with a type selected from the group consisting of a hashing value, a CRC code, and a cryptographic one-way function.

Claim 20. (previously presented): A method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of:

forming said second segment checksums in accordance with a type selected from the group consisting of a hashing value, a CRC code, and a cryptographic one-way function.

Claim 21. (previously presented): A method according to claim 3, further comprising the step of:

forming said first segment checksums and said second segment checksums in accordance with a type selected from the group consisting of a hashing value, a CRC code, and a cryptographic one-way function.

Claim 22. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein:

said cryptographic operation is an operation selected from the group consisting of a symmetric cryptographic method and an asymmetric cryptographic method.

Claim 23. (previously presented): A method according to claim 2, wherein:

said cryptographic operation is an operation selected from the group consisting of a symmetric cryptographic method and an asymmetric cryptographic method.

Claim 24. (previously presented): A method according to claim 3, wherein:

said cryptographic operation is an operation selected from the group consisting of a symmetric cryptographic method and an symmetric cryptographic method.

Claim 25. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein:

said commutative operation exhibits the property of associativity.

Claim 26. (previously presented): A method according to claim 2, wherein:
said commutative operation exhibits the property of associativity.

Claim 27. (previously presented): A method according to claim 3, wherein:
said commutative operation exhibits the property of associativity.

Claim 28. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein said digital data and the first cryptographic, commutative checksum are archived.

Claim 29. (previously presented): A method according to claim 2, wherein said digital data and the prescribed cryptographic commutative checksum have been archived.

Claim 30. (previously presented): A method according to claim 3, wherein said digital data are secured which are processed corresponding to a network management protocol.

Claim 31. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
protecting said digital data; and
processing said digital data in accordance with a network management protocol.

Claim 32. (previously presented): A method according to claim 2, further comprising the steps of:
protecting said digital data; and
processing said digital data in accordance with a network management protocol.

Claim 33. (previously presented): A method according to claim 3, further comprising the steps of:
protecting said digital data; and
processing said digital data in accordance with a network management protocol.

Claim 34. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 10, wherein:

said first segment checksums are formed in accordance with a type selected from the group consisting of a hashing value, a CRC code, and a cryptographic one-way function.

Claim 35. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 11, wherein:

said second segment checksums are both formed in accordance with a type selected from the group consisting of a hashing value, a CRC code, and a cryptographic one-way function.

Claim 36. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 11, wherein:

said first segment checksums and said second segment checksums are both formed in accordance with a type selected from the group consisting of a hashing value, a CRC code, and a cryptographic one-way function.

Claim 37. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 10, wherein:

said cryptographic operation is an operation selected from the group consisting of a symmetric cryptographic method and an asymmetric cryptographic method.

Claim 38. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 11, wherein:

said cryptographic operation is an operation selected from the group consisting of a symmetric cryptographic method and an asymmetric cryptographic method.

Claim 39. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 12, wherein:

said cryptographic operation is an operation selected from the group consisting of a symmetric cryptographic method and an asymmetric cryptographic method.

Claim 40. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 10 wherein said commutative operation exhibits the property of associativity via the arrangement of said arithmetic and logic unit.

Claim 41. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 11 wherein said commutative operation exhibits the property of associativity via the arrangement of said arithmetic and logic unit.

Claim 42. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 12, wherein said commutative operation exhibits the property of associativity via the arrangement of said arithmetic and logic unit.

Claim 43. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 10, wherein: said digital data and the first cryptographic, commutative checksum are archived.

Claim 44. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 11, wherein: said digital data and the prescribed cryptographic commutative checksum have been archived.

Claim 45. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 12, wherein: said digital data and the first cryptographic, commutative checksum are archived.

Claim 46. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 10, wherein: said digital data are protected via an arrangement of said arithmetic and logic unit; and said digital data are processed in accordance with a network management protocol.

Claim 47. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 11, wherein: said digital data are protected via an arrangement of said arithmetic and logic unit; and said digital data are processed in accordance with a network management protocol.

Claim 48. (previously presented): An arrangement according to claim 12, wherein: said digital data are protected via an arrangement of said arithmetic and logic unit; and said digital data are processed in accordance with a network management protocol.